

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 170758

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CO

SUBJECT: FAA SECTION 32 - POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: A. STATE 150955

B. BOGOTA 6216

C. PANAMA 4258

1. DEPT SHARES CONCERN OF EMBASSIES THAT IN INFORMING GOC AND GOP OF EXISTENCE AND EFFECT OF SECTION 32 WE AVOID IMPLICATION THAT WE ARE ACCUSING PANAMA OR COLOMBIA OF HOLDING POLITICAL PRISONERS. DEPT DOES NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS CONCERN NECESSITATES OUR REMAINING ENTIRELY SILENT ON SUBJECT. APPROACH CALLED FOR IN REF A HAS BEEN MADE TO OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE NO RECENT HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WITHOUT PROVOKING ANY MISUNDERSTANDING OF OUR MOTIVES.

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2. ONE WAY OF APPROACHING SUBJECT SO AS TO AVOID ANY

MISINTERPRETATION WOULD BE TO NOTE USG VIEW THAT WORLDWIDE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION DESERVES SERIOUS ATTENTION AND IMPROVEMENT; THAT USG IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING SITUATION WITH A VIEW TOWARDS DETERMINING HOW WE MIGHT BEST ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES; AND THAT ACCORDINGLY WE ARE CONSULTING WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO OBTAIN THEIR IDEAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. WE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN VIEWS OF FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE A TRADITION OF MAINTAINING CIVIL

LIBERTIES REGARDING MEANS BY WHICH OTHER NATIONS COULD BE ENCOURAGED TO ADOPT SIMILAR POLICIES. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO RAISE SECTION 32 MATTER WITHOUT IMPLYING ANY CRITICISM OF GOC OR GOP PRACTICES.

3. FOR BOGOTA: WE CONCUR IN YOUR JUDGMENT THAT IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO PRESENT THIS AS A FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WITH NEW LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION. WE LEAVE TIMING AND LEVEL OF DEMARCHE TO NEW GOC TO YOUR DISCRETION, KEEPING IN MIND OUR DESIRE FOR AN EARLY REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN AND HOST GOVERNMENT REACTION (SEE PARA 5, REF A).

4. FOR PANAMA: WE HOPE MATTER CAN BE RAISED AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF GOP PROMPTLY ALONG LINES OF REF A AND PARA 2 ABOVE. WITH REFERENCE TO MATTER OF CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS, YOU MAY WISH TO NOTE THAT OUR INTEREST IN GOP VIEWS ON HOW BEST TO ADVANCE THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WORLDWIDE IS EVIDENCE OF OUR DESIRE TO ESTABLISH A MATURE WORKING PARTNERSHIP WITH GOP BASED ON CLOSE CONSULTATIONS AND MUTUAL RESPECT, NOT ONLY WITH REGARD TO THE OPERATION AND PROTECTION OF THE CANAL, BUT IN OTHER AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AS WELL. KISSINGER

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